

Christianity and the Holocaust Ideology

Reflections on the Bishop Williamson Affair

[Paul Grubach](#)

In January of this year, Pope Benedict XVI lifted the ban of excommunication on four Bishops from the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X, who had been excommunicated in 1988 after being ordained against Vatican orders by the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. This would have generated very little news had it not been for the fact that one of them, Bishop Richard Williamson, gave an interview on Swedish television in which he rejected the orthodox Holocaust story. Williamson said historical evidence “is hugely against 6 million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler.” He agreed with Holocaust revisionists who he said concluded that “between 200,000-300,000 perished in Nazi concentration camps, but not one of them by gassing.”^[1]

Under pressure from Jewish groups and their Gentile supporters, the supreme Catholic hierarchy condemned Bishop Williamson’s beliefs, and he eventually offered an ambiguous apology. On January 26, the Vatican proclaimed any rejection of the traditional Holocaust story violates the teachings of the Catholic Church.^[2] In March, the Vatican’s envoy to Israel asserted that “Holocaust deniers” could not be considered Catholic.^[3] Another Vatican spokesman even claimed it is a “sin” to reject the orthodox version of the Jewish experience during WWII.^[4]

A significant portion of the world’s Christians already accept the orthodox Holocaust story due to decades of indoctrination from both governmental and media sources. The Catholic Church’s recent warning that to reject the Holocaust dogma “violates Catholic teachings” and is to “engage in sin” may well keep many well-meaning Catholics from even considering that there is another side to the Holocaust story.

The important question at this time is this. Does Christian morality really demand an acceptance of the traditional version of the Holocaust?

The Orthodox Holocaust Story and Christianity

One of the standard claims of the orthodox Holocaust story is that Western Christendom created the climate of opinion that made the alleged mass murder of six million Jews possible.^[5] Accordingly, European Christianity is to a large extent responsible for this horrendous massacre. Bishop Brian Farrell, vice president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, expressed this sentiment when he stated the Holocaust is a religious concern because it “took place in the heart of what was the supposedly Christian continent of Europe.”^[6]

These are serious charges leveled against Western Christianity. In order to evaluate the accusation—“Western Christendom is to a large extent responsible for the Holocaust.”—it must first be determined if the mass murder of six million Jews actually occurred.

This is not the only manner in which the Holocaust doctrine affects Christianity. There is a way in which it affects world Christianity, and not just European Christendom. A quite popular school of philosophy claims that “God died with Auschwitz.” According to this line of thought, a morally perfect, omnipotent God that deeply loves all mankind would never allow something as horrendous and monstrous as the

Holocaust to take place. But the Holocaust did occur. Hence, the God of Judaism and Christianity does not exist.

Jewish theologian Amos Finkelstein expressed this philosophy with the following statement: “The admission that God—or ethical theism—died in Auschwitz because Auschwitz defies all meaning calls, we are told, for a radical change in the most fundamental premises.” [\[7\]](#)

The Christian theologian, Robert McAfee Brown, reluctantly agreed (somewhat) with Finkelstein: “This is the crisis of belief that the Holocaust forces on us. For who, whether Jew or Christian, can believe in a God in whose world such things take place? The perennial mystery of evil, the source of our greatest vulnerability as believers, reaches unique expression in the Holocaust. No theodicy can encompass this event so that its wounds are closed or its scars healed. It forever precludes easy faith in God or humanity. Both are placed under judgment, and a verdict or acquittal may not be lightly rendered, if at all, to either party.” [\[8\]](#)

The pro-Zionist Catholic theologian, Harry James Cargas, drew a similar conclusion: “The Holocaust is, in my judgment, the greatest tragedy for Christians since the crucifixion. In the first instance, Jesus died; in the latter, Christianity may be said to have died.” [\[9\]](#)

In the wake of the Bishop Williamson affair, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, a papal spokesman, echoed these sentiments when he said that to deny the Holocaust is to deny “the most obvious manifestation” of the presence of evil in the world. He added: “A religious person, a Christian must face the challenge of faith represented by this fact, by the evil in the world.” [\[10\]](#)

The religious doubts of McAfee Brown, Cargas and Lombardi can be summarized as follows. It is almost inconceivable that a religion which is directly inspired by God could be responsible for something as monstrous as the Holocaust, the meticulously planned mass murder of millions of Jews. But the Holocaust did occur, and Christendom is largely responsible for it. Hence, Christianity may not be inspired by a morally perfect, omnipotent Being, or this Supreme Being may not even exist.

Clearly then, the whole Holocaust ideology represents a direct challenge to the credibility and existence of Christianity and a belief in God, as a significant number of theologians and churchmen have given serious consideration to this “God-died-with-Auschwitz” theology. In order that Christians may successfully deal with the crisis of faith that the Holocaust ideology has created, it is necessary to first answer the most obvious question: Did the Holocaust actually occur? In order to answer this in a truthful way, one must evaluate both the traditional and revisionist views of the Holocaust in a fair and objective manner.

However, in mainstream Western society this is not possible. The Holocaust can be used to discredit and disprove God’s existence, and attack and undermine the Christian religion. (Elie Wiesel has done just that when he claimed that “the sincere Christian knows what died in Auschwitz was not the Jewish people but Christianity.” [\[11\]](#)) Yet, it is not acceptable to debunk the traditional Holocaust story. According to the prevailing mores, it is “evil and immoral” to reject it. This prevailing “moral judgment” was expressed when Vatican spokesman Lombardi said that “denying” the traditional version of the Holocaust can be “a serious sin of lying mixed, in addition, with components of racism and anti-Semitism.” [\[12\]](#)

But is it really morally wrong for a Christian to reject the traditional Holocaust story?

To put the Holocaust beyond the realm of rational critique, to make it sinful and immoral to debunk it, is tantamount to elevating it to the status of a sacred dogma. Yet, the traditional Holocaust story is a human interpretation of history created by human historians, and is propagated by human institutions. There is nothing “sacred” about the Holocaust ideology, as it was not in any way sanctioned by the Supreme Being. God did not hand down the doctrine of the Holocaust to Moses on Mt. Sinai along with the Ten Commandments. The orthodox version of the Holocaust is only as good as the evidence that supports it. One could cogently argue that to endow this humanly created doctrine with an aura of holy, religious sacredness is, according to Christian morality, to engage in idolatry. How so?

In Exodus 20: 1-7, idol worship is explicitly condemned. We read: “I am the Lord your God...You shall have no other gods before me...you shall not bow down to them [the ‘other gods’] or serve them.” In contemporary Western society and mainstream Christian circles, the Holocaust is before the concept of God. You can use the Holocaust ideology to “disprove” and discredit the concept of God and Christianity (as the popular “God-died-with-Auschwitz” theology shows), but it is “evil and immoral” to attempt to disprove the Holocaust ideology. You can use it to critically examine and question the very existence of God, as the “God-died-with-Auschwitz” theologians do. Yet, one cannot critically evaluate this “other god,” the Holocaust. You must only bow down and serve it. That is to say, just uncritically accept it.

Even the bitter opponent of “Holocaust denial,” Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer, admits the Holocaust is now viewed as “a mysterious event, an upside-down miracle so to speak, an event of religious significance in the sense that it is not man-made as that term is normally understood.” [\[13\]](#) The Holocaust is the secular religion of the Western world, complete with punishment and prison sentences for heretics who reject it. It is an “other god” that has been raised above all other religions, including the Christian religion and the concept of God itself, and in this sense it truly is a form of anti-Christian idol worship.

The Vatican’s Promotion of Holocaust Falsehood and the Search for Truth

In regard to the traditional Holocaust story, the Papacy has a documented track record of piously promoting a Holocaust falsehood. Herewith.

At the postwar Nuremberg Tribunal, the Allies charged that the Germans exterminated four million people at Auschwitz. Until 1990, a memorial plaque at Auschwitz read: “Four Million People Suffered and Died Here at the Hands of the Nazi Murderers Between the Years 1940 and 1945.” [\[14\]](#) During a 1979 visit to the camp, Pope John Paul II stood before this memorial and blessed the alleged four million victims. [\[15\]](#)

In July 1990, the Polish government's Auschwitz State Museum, along with Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust center, conceded that the four million figure was a gross exaggeration, and references to it were accordingly removed from the Auschwitz monument. Israeli and Polish officials announced a tentative revised toll of about 1.1 million Auschwitz dead. [\[16\]](#)

Around September of 1989, mainstream Holocaust historians began admitting that the four million figure was a deliberate myth. According to Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer, the Poles wanted to create a “national myth,” so this “required” that a large number of both Poles and Jews lost their lives at Auschwitz. Polish propagandists intentionally exaggerated the figures, and told the world that 1.5 million Poles and 2.5 million Jews were murdered at Auschwitz concentration camp. [\[17\]](#) Dutch-Jewish

historian Robert Jan van Pelt noted the four million falsehood was originally established by the Soviets, and then later used by the communist rulers of Poland for their own political goal of laying claim to formerly German territories. [\[18\]](#)

In regard to the politically inspired falsehood that four million people were murdered at Auschwitz, the late Pope John Paul II proposed it should be used as a “religious inspiration.” We let the New York Times pick up the story here about his June of 1979 religious service at the Auschwitz concentration camp: “His voice going hoarse on the sixth day of the visit to his native Poland, the Pope asked that all his listeners commit themselves to the care of human beings and the oppressed, in testimony for the four million—including two and a half million Jews—who died in the camps he could see from the raised altar platform.” [\[19\]](#)

Here we have a clear example of John Paul II lending his immense moral authority to a propaganda lie. How many millions of Christians believed the four million falsehood because the Pope himself lent his moral power to it?

In his defense, there are those who will say that John Paul II was not aware that the four million figure was a deliberate myth. He did not willfully mislead people; thus, he is not guilty of any wrongdoing. Even if we assume this is correct, it still remains that he instructed his followers to accept this falsehood and use it as an inspiration to action.

If Pope John Paul II had real moral integrity on this issue, he would have publicly apologized for lending his moral authority to a falsehood and misleading his flock. At the very least, he should have shown moral integrity by publicly admitting that the Auschwitz death toll of four million is a gross exaggeration.

But he never did this. Nor has any official of the Catholic Church ever publicly apologized for the Papal wrong of lending moral credence to the propaganda lie that four million people were murdered at Auschwitz.

Let us look at this from another angle. In Exodus 20:16 it is written: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Now, this false claim that the Germans murdered four million people at Auschwitz is in fact an example of various political elites (the Soviets, Polish communists, the Allies) bearing false witness against their German neighbors.

Pope John Paul II never publicly apologized for helping these political elites to “bear false witness against their neighbor.” This shows that even the so-called “moral conscience” of the West had questionable moral integrity on this Holocaust issue.

Let us further consider some other implications of the Vatican’s proclamations. On February 12, Benedict XVI claimed that “it is clear that every negation or minimization of this terrible crime [the Holocaust] is intolerable and at the same time unacceptable.” [\[20\]](#)

According to the Pope’s pronouncement, the Auschwitz State Museum and the Israel’s Yad Vashem Memorial to the Holocaust have already committed an “intolerable act.” They down-sized the number of people allegedly killed at Auschwitz from 4 million to 1.1 million. How come Pope Benedict did not specifically condemn them for their “intolerable act” of “minimizing the Holocaust?”

The Christian and the Search for Truth

There is no commandment in the Bible that says: "You shall believe in the Holocaust ideology." However, there are statements in the New Testament that command the Christian to search for truth. So it is written in Mark 10: 19: "You know the commandments: ...You shall not bear false witness." In John 3: 21, we read: "But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God." In John 8: 31-32, it is stated: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." In 1 John 2: 21, this theme of finding truth is again stated: "I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and know that no lie is of the truth." Finally, to illustrate the point, let us quote Exodus 20: 16: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." These statements clearly imply that followers of the Bible's teachings will search for truth and reject lies.

Herein lies the ultimate lesson of Pope John Paul II's promotion of the "four-million-murdered-at-Auschwitz" falsehood. A Christian does not find the truth about the alleged Holocaust by blindly accepting what the mass media and various political elites tell him to believe. For if he did, he could end up like Pope John Paul II who accepted and promoted the propaganda falsehood that four million people were murdered at Auschwitz.

The real Christian strives for the truth. He gives the revisionist and traditional view of the Holocaust a fair hearing, and then attempts to determine where the truth really is. The "Holocaust" is an ideological interpretation of history that is propagated world wide by various power elites. It is to be evaluated with the same set of rational-scientific methods that historians and political scientists apply to other doctrines of this nature.

Bishop Williamson correctly expressed this viewpoint when he stated in an interview: "I must now review the historical evidence [for the Holocaust doctrine] once again. I said the same thing in my interview with Swedish television: Historical evidence is at issue, not emotions. And if I find this evidence, I will correct myself. But that will take time." [21]

Did a Vatican Bishop "Bears False Witness" about Holocaust Evidence?

In the wake of the Williamson affair, Bishop Brian Farrell, vice president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, defined the Vatican position on the Holocaust. He said the testimony of the survivors of the Nazi death camps, the remains of the camps themselves and the meticulous documentation kept by the Nazis prove that the Holocaust and the death of 6 million Jews is a historical fact that can be denied "only through ignorance or prejudice." [22] As we shall soon see, it is Bishop Farrell who speaks through ignorance or prejudice, and thus, may be guilty of violating the Christian command: "Thou shall not bear false witness."

Does the testimony of the survivors of the "death camps" prove the Holocaust? If Bishop Farrell really believes this to be so, he should read, *Assassins of Memory*, which was written by mainstream Holocaust historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet.

In various passages and footnotes, Vidal-Naquet briefly discusses eyewitnesses who claimed they "saw gas chambers" where there were none. [23] He admits "there were imaginary gas chambers." [24] That is, many Holocaust survivors gave false testimony, claiming there were "homicidal mass gassings" where it is now known that they never happened. He cites the false testimony "of a Protestant theologian,

Charles Hauter, who was deported to Buchenwald, never saw any gas chamber, and who went on to rave about them.”[\[25\]](#) (Even Christian theologians can tell lies about the Holocaust, Bishop Farrell.)

In a paraphrase of Dr. Robert Faurisson’s Holocaust revisionist argument, Vidal-Naquet’s translator states the dilemma in the form of a question: “Moreover, since numerous eyewitness reports [about the “homicidal gas chambers”] had already been discredited, on what basis could anyone accept any such testimony?”[\[26\]](#)

Bishop Farrell should ask himself this question. How can the testimony of survivors of the “death camps” prove that the Holocaust and the death of six million Jews is a historical fact when so many of these testimonies have been shown to be unreliable?

Bishop Farrell says the “meticulous documentation kept by the Nazis proves that the Holocaust and the death of six million Jews is a historical fact.” Once again, this is a statement that is grounded in either ignorance or prejudice.

Mainstream Holocaust historian Leon Poliakov pointed out decades ago that there are no documents to prove that the Nazis ever had any plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe: “[T]he campaign to exterminate the Jews, as regards its conception as well as many other essential aspects, remains shrouded in darkness. Inferences, psychological considerations, and third- or fourth-hand reports enable us to reconstruct its development with considerable accuracy. Certain details, however, must remain forever unknown. The three or four people chiefly involved in the actual drawing up of the plan for total extermination are dead and no documents have survived; perhaps none ever existed.”[\[27\]](#)

In short, the “evidence” that “establishes” the existence of an alleged Nazi plan to exterminate the Jews is simply the guesswork of Holocaust historians. Contrary to what Bishop Farrell said, there is no meticulous documentation kept by the Nazis that proves the orthodox Holocaust story is a historical fact.

Bishop Farrell says that the remains of the camps themselves prove the Holocaust and the death of six million Jews is a historical fact. But is this so?

In winter/spring of 2000, British historian David Irving sued Jewish historian Deborah Lipstadt and her publisher, Penguin Books, in the High Court in London, claiming that he was libeled in her anti-revisionist tome, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*. Lipstadt and company’s defense attorneys assembled a team of world-renowned Holocaust experts as part of their campaign to discredit Irving and validate Lipstadt’s claims. The presiding Judge, Charles Gray, was presented with the most powerful evidence and arguments in favor of the traditional view of the Holocaust. Certain conclusions of Judge Gray falsify Farrell’s claim that physical evidence at the Nazi concentration camps proves the orthodox Holocaust story correct.

As the British magistrate noted, there is next to nothing remaining at the German camps to substantiate the traditional Holocaust story. He wrote: “What is the evidence for mass extermination of Jews at those camps? The consequence of the absence of any overt documentary evidence of gas chambers at these camps, coupled with the lack of archeological evidence, means that reliance has to be placed on eyewitness and circumstantial evidence...”[\[28\]](#)

Judge Gray further pointed out that even the mainstream historians of the Holocaust admit the remains of Auschwitz offer little evidence for the mass extermination claims: “[The team of Holocaust experts] accept that the physical evidence remaining at the site of Auschwitz provides little evidence to support the claim that gas chambers were operated there for genocidal purposes.” [29]

The questionable testimony of the survivors of the “death camps,” the miniscule remains of the camps themselves, and the very little documentation left by the Germans falsify Bishop Farrell’s claim that these forms of evidence prove the traditional view of the Holocaust and the death of six million Jews.

Once again, we quote Mark 10: 19: “You know the commandments: ...You shall not bear false witness.” Why is Bishop Farrell possibly guilty of “Bearing False Witness?” He falsely claimed (either because of ignorance or prejudice) that the traditional version of the Holocaust is an etched-in-stone fact, when in reality it is very questionable.

The Vatican: An Impediment to Truth?

The Vatican has a past history of condemning non-conformist theories that in the end turned out to be the truth. In 1616 and again in 1633 the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisition condemned as formal heresy the then novel scientific finding that the earth revolves about the sun. The Popes Paul V and Urban VIII sanctioned this condemnation. At the dawn of a new age of reason, the Catholic hierarchy was perceived as an obstacle in the way of finding scientific truth.

The Pope is again repeating a similar error in regard to the Holocaust ideology. By bowing to pressure from international Jewish-Zionist organizations and elevating the Holocaust ideology to the status of an unquestionable dogma, the Vatican has inserted religious belief into a debate that should be based on historical documentation and research. By taking the path of least resistance, the Vatican has neither served the Christian world that looks to it for guidance nor the cause of truth in history.

Notes:

Copyrighted 2009, by Paul Grubach. All rights reserved.

[1] Nicole Winfield, “Pope’s rehabilitation of Holocaust denier sparks Jewish outrage,” Associated Press release, 27 January 2009. Online: www.thestar.com/News/World/article/577773

[2] Ibid.

[3] Nir Hasson, “Vatican envoy: Holocaust deniers can’t be considered Catholic,” HAARETZ.com, 10 March 2009. Online: www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1069995.html

[4] Cindy Wooden, “Remembering the Holocaust: A scientific fact, a religious obligation,” Catholic News Service, 6 February 2009. Online: www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0900582.htm

- [5] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews: Student Edition* (Holmes & Meirer, 1985), passim.
- [6] See Wooden, footnote 4.
- [7] Francois Furet, ed., *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews* (Schocken Books, 1989), p.296.
- [8] *Dimensions of the Holocaust: Lectures at Northwestern University* (Evanston, Ill., 1977), p. 49.
- [9] Harry James Cargas, *A Christian Response to the Holocaust* (Denver, Col., 1981), p.v.
- [10] See Wooden, footnote 4.
- [11] Quoted in Cargas, p. 31.
- [12] See Wooden, footnote 4.
- [13] Quoted in Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution* (International Institute for Holocaust Research, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2008), p. 237.
- [14] Nuremberg document 008-USSR; IMT "blue series," Vol. 39, pp. 24-25. Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, eds., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp* (Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 61-62; Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (The Free Press, 1993), p.188, footnote.
- [15] See photograph at <http://zundelsite.org/english/antiprop/plaques/pope.jpg>
- [16] Gutman and Berenbaum. Lipstadt, p. 188, footnote.
- [17] Yehuda Bauer, *Auschwitz: The Dangers of Distortion*," Jerusalem Post International Edition, week ending 30 September 2009; Peter Steinfeld, "Auschwitz Revisionism: An Israeli Scholar's Case," *New York Times*, 12 November 1989.
- [18] Robert Jan van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial* (Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 109.
- [19] John Vinocur, "Pope Prays at Auschwitz: 'Only Peace!,'" *The New York Times*, 8 June 1979, p.A1.
- [20] "Bishop Williamson Apologizes for Holocaust Comments: Expresses Regret for Harm to Church and Victims," ZENIT: the world seen from Rome, 26 February 2009. Online: <http://www.zenit.org/article-25207?!=english>

- [21] "Spiegel Interview with Bishop Williamson: I Will Not Travel to Auschwitz," SPIEGEL ONLINE INTERNATIONAL, 9 February 2009. Online: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,606323,00.html>
- [22] See Wooden, footnote 4.
- [23] Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust* (Columbia University Press, 1992), pp.14, 181fn44.
- [24] *Ibid*, p. 181fn44.
- [25] *Ibid*, p.14.
- [26] *Ibid*, p.xii.
- [27] Leon Poliakov, *The Harvest of Hate: The Nazi Program for the Destruction of the Jews of Europe* (Holocaust Library, 1979), p.108.
- [28] See Judge Gray's "Judgment" in the Irving-Lipstadt libel trial, online: www.focal.org/judg.html , paragraph 7.118.
- [29] *Ibid*, paragraph 6.80.

Author(s) :	Paul Grubach
Title:	Christianity and the Holocaust Ideology
Sources:	<i>Inconvenient History</i> , vol. 1, no. 1 (summer 2009)
Dates:	published: 2009-08-01, first posted: 2012-09-26 00:00:00

<https://inconvenienthistory.com/1/1/1899>